

that the sponsor will make available to the members via the telephone a knowledgeable person for responding to members' questions.

Other embodiments of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from a consideration of the specification or practice of the invention disclosed herein. It is intended that the specification and examples be considered as exemplary only, with the true scope and spirit of the invention being indicated by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of generating revenue online, comprising the steps of:
providing a secure and privacy protected Internet accessible web site to an online community having members with an interest in a particular professional association; and
selling to one or more entities the right for a predetermined amount of time to provide to the members expertise related to the professional association via the online community.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the members comprise potential customers with whom the entities may develop personal relationships.
3. A method of allowing two or more parties to network, the method comprising the steps of:
providing a secure and privacy protected Internet accessible web site for an online community dedicated to a professional association;
soliciting one or more persons to become members of the online community;

providing secure and anonymous access to persons selected for free membership to the Internet site; and

exchanging for value with one or more sponsors a right to provide expertise related to the professional association via the online community for a predetermined amount of time.

4. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein the right to provide expertise is an exclusive right provided to one sponsor.

5. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein the professional association comprises a professional discipline.

6. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein the professional association comprises a non-profit entity.

7. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein the professional association comprises a for-profit entity.

8. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein further comprising the step of:
selecting persons for admission as members based upon the recommendation of previously admitted members and additional screening criteria.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the additional screening criteria includes membership in the professional association.

10. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein the predetermined amount of time is at least three months.

11. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein providing expertise includes abstaining from overt marketing practices targeting the members.

12. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein providing expertise includes responding to members' questions in a dedicated discussion thread accessible to all members.

13. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein providing expertise includes making available a knowledgeable person to respond to members' questions via the telephone.

14. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein providing expertise includes hosting a live online chat conference on a particular topic of interest to the members.

15. The method of claims 1 or 3, wherein the members may optionally provide their personal information to other members or sponsors in the online community.

16. The method of claims 1 or 3, further comprising the step of:
sharing with the professional association the exchanged-for value obtained from the one or more sponsors.

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